

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL NEEDS  
SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

**VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL**

NOVEMBER -- DECEMBER 2000

# SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

## Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with disabilities. The SSS model is designed to promote the involvement of the Private school (or State Agency) special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the Private school (or State Agency) meets the minimum regulations and what effects the programs and services have on student performances. Finally, the SSS develops a support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this, the SSS includes these components:

- ♦ The Orientation Meeting The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Private Special Education School (or State Agency) representatives to plan the site visit and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- ♦ Data Analysis Meeting The RIDE staff meets to review demographic information on selected reports including: Private (or State Agency) Special Education School Application for Approval, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 5 to 10 percent of students with disabilities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed; and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with disabilities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of these data.
- ♦ Presentation by the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School and School Site Visit The site visit begins with a presentation of programs by staff. The presentation provides the visiting team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, visits to the school are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School personnel to generate a report covering the following:
  - The school's (or state agency's) compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with disabilities.
  - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the school (or state agency).
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the school (or state agency) to improve programs and services.

- ♦ The Support Plan The RIDE team and the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School administrator(s) meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school (or state agency) to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- ♦ The SSS Report The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: indicators, findings, documentation and support plan. Indicators either describe performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some fifteen categories, from school improvement to the least restrictive environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the school (or state agency) as well as that RIDE will assist the school (or state agency) to improve programs and services.

## VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	Viola M. Berard School, an arm of the Northern Rhode Island Community Services, was approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education as an independent private special education school, elementary, middle through secondary level in 1999. The school program was designed primarily as an education extension of day treatment, crisis intervention, mental health/rehabilitation and assessment, and remediation of education skills. It emphasizes reintegration/transition into public schools and when appropriate other alternatives such as job placement. The school is designed primarily as a 45-day diagnostic placement with longer placements (e.g. 90 - 180 days) as determined by special education IEP procedures.	Documentation  Presentation  Document Review  Observation	
Performance	Viola M. Berard School has used self-evaluations/staff debriefing to determine priority issues, including staff training, retention, and behavioral issues. School and Northern Rhode Island Community staff have improved the competitive remuneration schedule for teachers and start school for staff training and familiarization with school policies and procedures one week before students arrive. The Northern Rhode Island Community Services just added reimbursement incentives for tuition expenses.	Presentation  Staff Interviews  Documentation	The Viola M. Berard School may want to consider if it can collaborate with other similar entities to promote more formal arrangements with postsecondary institutions to provide undergraduate/ graduate degree programs geared for more severely emotionally disturbed students.
Performance	Viola M. Berard School is adding, using, and integrating computer technology as a teaching and learning component.	Observation  Presentation	Viola M. Berard School should expand links in computer technology with additional professional development in selected curriculum areas (e.g., reading skills, social studies, mathematics, and science), interdisciplinary and thematic instruction for teachers and teacher assistants.
Performance	Viola M. Berard School staff exhibit strong commitment and teamwork. Teachers, teacher assistants, mental health caseworkers, and vocational specialists work closely and appear to consult readily and on a daily basis.	Observation  Staff Interviews  Presentation	

# **VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL**

## **GOOD TEACHING PRACTICES**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance	Viola M. Berard School special education teachers, teacher assistants, and related service staff meet every day, morning and afternoon, to review, share ideas, concerns, specific cases and strategies for student behavioral and educational issues	Presentation Staff Interviews On-Site Observation	
Performance	<p>Viola M. Berard School management emphasize and staff display commitment to emphasize activity based curriculum, cross-curricular themes, and integrated learning and instructional activities. The School Support Team commends the Physical Educational/Health program instructor and assistants as well as school administrators for applying these approaches in ways which reduce behavioral outbursts, time outs, smoking, and improve healthy alternative behaviors.</p> <p>Viola M. Berard School uses off-site gymnasiums (Woonsocket YMCA, YWCA, and Cumberland Boys/Girls Club) Real health issues appear aligned with health education content and activities along with significant gross motor development.</p> <p>Viola M. Berard School staff are exploring adding a swimming program by using the Woonsocket YMCA.</p>	Presentation Staff Interviews On-Site Observation	
Performance	Viola M. Berard School teachers and teacher assistants use team teaching, thematic studies, and interdisciplinary curricular models. School staff video tape field trips, use topics and themes from them to provide art, music, health, mathematics, history, geography, and literature content, skill and problem solving techniques.	Presentation Documentation Staff Interviews On-Site Observation	
Performance	Viola M. Berard School uses municipal libraries and media services in Woonsocket and Cumberland. Library resources are used for research on projects and individual papers. Viola M. Berard School takes its elementary students to local theatres for plays and performances, Rhode Island School of Design Museum and the Roger Williams Park Planetarium, etc.	Presentation Staff Interviews	

# **VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL**

## **GOOD TEACHING PRACTICES (cont.)**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance	Viola M. Berard School promotes writing and language as well as behavioral goals and objectives by encouraging students to interview, compose articles and put together a school newsletter, yearbook, etc..	Presentation  Documentation  Staff Interviews	
Performance	There is close collaboration between the Viola M. Berard School clinicians, teachers, and families. Individual, group, and family counseling is offered and provided to students and their families. Parent Education/Training workshop sessions are provided. Assistance is provided with arranging and referring students and families for extra-curricula activities, driver education, as well as reintegration/ transition of students in regular school district placements. Support staff make themselves available to teachers and teacher assistants in helping families of students collaborate in the educational process. In addition, psychiatric and psychological evaluations and interventions are available in the agency.	Presentation  Staff Interviews  Documentation  Parent Interview	
Performance	Viola M. Berard School elementary classroom (Gr. 2-4) displayed self-biographies and photographs of students. School Support Team observed daily schedule, science and sports charts. Each student has a behavior chart. Student made health/anti-smoking posters are prominently displayed.	Observation  Presentation  Staff Interviews	

## VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL

### FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	The Viola M. Berard School emphasizes preparing students to return to resident school districts. This is particularly noticeable at primary and elementary levels. Viola M. Berard School measures its effectiveness by follow-up hospitalization data, home and resident school district placement and family behavioral outcome assessments. The school also surveys parents and school district personnel.	Document Review  Staff Interviews  Record Reviews  Presentation	
Performance	<p>The Viola M. Berard School provides a highly structured, predictable and stable behavioral management system. The school uses as one of its major curriculum components instruction of affective education/management strategies. This is designed through self-awareness of natural consequences of behavior normally found in society. The school uses a level system that provides immediate written and oral reaction based upon individualized behavior goals written in I.E.P's and reviewed daily and weekly by an entire multi-disciplinary team. A point system is used to reinforce appropriate behavior throughout school programs, activities, and functions. Students may earn free time with computers, help with lunch, movies, special lunches, purchase items at a "School Store".</p> <p>Students demonstrating self control issues may be assigned to work individually with a teacher, teacher assistant, or clinician. If this is not successful, a student is given an opportunity to remove him or herself to a planning room (Quiet Room) to give a student further opportunity to regain self control with direct support from clinical staff. If a student presents a danger to him or herself or to others, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (Cornell University Model) can follow. The latter can range from "Life Space Interview" to physical restraint. No restraints are used for middle and high school level students. Oral redirection, physical proximity, timeouts, life space interviewing with behaviors matched with consequences and reality-based problem solving are used to develop understanding of choices and alternatives at middle and secondary school levels.</p> <p>Staff are trained annually and appear well versed in crisis intervention techniques, including basket hold and team restraint. Staff appear to be carefully supervised regarding timeouts and follow detailed and prescriptive procedures for therapeutic holding. There appears to be very elaborate reviews of restraint frequency. School staff track antecedent behavior and what methods appear to work. Staff and parents appear to understand and support the school's behavior management system. Weekly academic and behavior progress notes are sent to parents.</p>	Presentation  Observation  Staff Interviews  Document Review  Record Review	

**VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL**

**FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE) (cont.)**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance	Viola M. Berard School staff assist school bus drivers with pupil pickups and exiting. The school behavior management point system when indicated is used for improving student behavior during transportation time.	Presentation  Documentation  Staff Interviews	



**VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL****FAPE/TRANSITION**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance	<p>Viola M. Berard School is committed to providing vocational/transitional services preparing students for employment and independent living. There appears to be effective collaboration between the Youth Vocational Specialist, school administrators, and secondary level teacher to develop the transition component of I.E.P's.</p> <p>The Vocational Specialist works closely with the Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitative Services. Arrangements are made for work study options.</p>	<p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Document Review</p>	<p>The Viola M. Berard School should expand partnerships and arrangements with businesses. These entities in turn can help in the development of transition plans which contain viable employment training and work. The school may also want to explore a related service option such as job coaching as work experience and employment partnerships are created and expanded.</p>

**VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL****FAPE - PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance/ Compliance	Based on analysis of the complaint/mediation/and hearing system within the last two (2) years, (since 1999 when the school received approval from the Rhode Island Department of Education), the Viola M. Berard School appears to resolve the majority of issues at the school level.	RIDE Complaint Management and Hearing Systems	

## VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL

### LEASE RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>Viola M. Berard School students participate with non-disabled students in sports, field trips, social events (etc.) through the referring school department. Berard School administrators and clinical staff contact and assist local educational agency personnel coordinating these activities.</p> <p>The Berard School Behavioral/Vocational Specialist provides assistance with O.R.S. referrals, job training skills, arranges for work study and makes arrangements with employers. While this promotes secondary level transition school-to-work experiences, it also provides real life interaction with non-disabled peers.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Documentation</p>	

# **VIOLA M. BERARD SCHOOL**

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>The Viola M. Berard School works in partnership with referring school districts and parents. There appears to be frequent communication between staff and parents. This includes telephone calls, clinical/case work in homes and providing inservice training to parents, and weekly progress reports.</p> <p>Viola M. Berard School, as an arm of Northern Rhode Island Community Services works closely with Northern Rhode Island Child and Adolescent Service System (CASSP). As a resource network of parent advocates and child serving agencies, it assists parents and agencies such as the Northern Rhode Island Community Services to use identified processes, funding, and an array of school and service agencies to help families and children with mental health needs.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>Parent Interview</p>	